



## TVAES Online Study Day – Egypt and Nubia

Saturday June 10<sup>th</sup> 2023 – 10am – 4.30pm

The Thames Valley Ancient Egypt Society is delighted to announce its first online fundraising study day. All the proceeds for the day will be donated to support the fieldwork and research programme of the Sudan Archaeological Research Society (SARS) in Nubia. This day will bring together five active scholars in the field presenting their current research into topical aspects of the relationship of Egypt and its southern neighbour with an emphasis on the New Kingdom and Meroitic Periods.



*View of Meroë's northern pyramid field, 2018. © H.C. Bishop-Wright.*

### Programme

- 10am Welcome (John Billman, TVAES; Julie Anderson, SARS)
- 10.10am **In the Presence of Giants – Exploring the Giraffe-motif in Sudan and Egypt with Dr Loretta Kilroe**
- 11.20-11.35am Break
- 11.35am – 12.50 **Beyond Egypt's Southern Frontier: Lower Nubia and the Kingdom of Meroe with Dr Henry Bishop-Wright**
- 12.50 – 13.50 Lunch
- 13.50 – 15.00 **The Bioarchaeology of the Middle Nile Valley – Insights into the past people of ancient Sudan with Drs Rebecca Whiting and Emma Phillips**
- 15.00 – 15.15 Break
- 15.15 – 16.25pm **All That Glitters Is Not Gold: Nubian Skeuomorphic Arts with Dr Carl Walsh**
- 16.30pm Close

Each lecture will feature a short Q&A session at the end.

Course Fees: £25 TVAES and SARS Members, £30 Non Members

Booking is online only at <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/tvaes> , TVAES and SARS members will be emailed a discount password, the details of the study day are below and online at [www.tvaes.org.uk](http://www.tvaes.org.uk)

### **Lecture one: Dr Loretta Kilroe (The British Museum)**

**Bio:** Loretta Kilroe completed her PhD at the University of Oxford in 2019 and now works as the Project Curator for Sudan and Nubia at the British Museum. Her research focuses on ceramics and their potential to reconstruct ancient activities, practices, and beliefs. She has excavated at numerous sites in Sudan including Amara West, H25 and Kurgus, and is currently Honorary Secretary for the Sudan Archaeological Research Society.

**Title:** In the Presence of Giants – Exploring the Giraffe-motif in Sudan and Egypt.

**Abstract:** The giraffe was a striking feature on Sudanese media in the Kushite kingdom. However, its potential relevance to Kushite society has been little explored. The motif transcended production techniques and occurred across the Middle Nile region, suggesting it was highly significant in the Meroitic symbolic language and likely held an important place in contemporary belief structures. This paper will discuss the wider interest in giraffes in both Egypt and Sudan across a long timespan, exploring how different cultures engaged with this symbol, and how we might use it to interpret disparate cultural practices and ideas.



*A Meroitic pot showing a painted giraffe, EA 30712. Taken by L. Kilroe, Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum*

### **Lecture two: Dr Henry Bishop-Wright (Cardiff University)**

**Bio:** Following the completion of a PhD that examined material connections between Meroitic Sudan and Ptolemaic-Roman Egypt (Exeter, 2021), Henry joined the British Museum as a Project Curator in the Middle East Department where he co-curated the *Luxury and power: Persia to Greece* exhibition (2023). He now holds a research position at Cardiff University (Leverhulme), working on the Sacred Animal Necropolis at Saqqara (2023-25).

**Title:** Beyond Egypt's Southern Frontier: Lower Nubia and the Kingdom of Meroe.

**Abstract:** Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Kingdom of Meroë (c. 300 BC – 350 AD) has been a fixture of archaeological research in Sudan. Important excavations have not, however, always reached full publication and there is much to gain by revisiting their archives. The Meroitic cemetery of Faras (Sudanese Nubia), excavated by the Oxford Egyptologist Francis Llewellyn Griffith between 1910 and 1912, is a case in point. Drawing on the speaker's doctoral reassessment of the site, this lecture challenges established ideas concerning the chronology of Meroitic settlement across the southern frontier of Ptolemaic-Roman Egypt.

### **Lecture three: Drs Rebecca Whiting and Emma Phillips (The British Museum)**

**Bio: Dr Rebecca Whiting:** Since studying a BA in Egyptian Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London (UCL), Rebecca has focused on the study of ancient human remains, completing a Masters in Skeletal and Dental Bioarchaeology at UCL. Her AHRC funded PhD research, under a Collaborative Award between UCL and The British Museum, was completed in 2022. It focused on the dental anthropology in Ancient Sudan, particularly shifts in oral disease over a period of environmental and cultural changes. Rebecca has been the lead bioarchaeologist on several excavations in Sudan and Egypt, working closely with colleagues from both countries. She is currently Curator of Bioarchaeology at the British Museum and the Secretary of the Institute for Bioarchaeology. Rebecca's recent research has focused on cancer in Ancient Nubia, recently gaining editors pick for an article in the *Lancet Oncology*. She is also investigating links between cardiovascular disease, oral pathology and systemic inflammation.

**Bio: Dr Emma LW Phillips**

Emma completed a BA in Archaeology and Classics at the University of Kent. Since then, her focus has been on studying skeletal and dental remains, studying for a Masters in Bioarchaeology and Forensic Anthropology at University College London (UCL). Continuing her research, Emma finalised her PhD in 2023, which was a collaborative award between Liverpool John Moores University and the British Museum. This project investigated the population history of groups in Ancient Sudan using bio-distance data. Currently Emma is a contractor at the British Museum, working on projects relating to the demography of Kerma period individuals, as well as growth and development in Ancient Sudanese populations.

**Title:** The Bioarchaeology of the Middle Nile Valley – Insights into the past people of ancient Sudan

**Abstract:** The study of ancient human remains, or bioarchaeology, provides insights into past peoples that can not be gained from other sources. Investigation of these remains offers a human connection through time, which helps us to better understand the material culture, as well as social, environmental and cultural dynamics. The British Museum has a very active programme of research into the ancient Sudanese human skeletal and mummified remains in its care, and recent investigations have enhanced our knowledge of the past people inhabiting this region. This presentation will highlight the various ways in which the skeletal remains and archaeology can combine to better understand diet, food processing, disease, and population origins. Due to the unique location of Sudan, this research has also provided information on the impact of the environment on human health, the antiquity of diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular disease and improved our understanding of ancient Nubians and the cultural groups to which they belonged.



*Kerma Burial, c. 2050-1750 BC. EA83231, image by R. Whiting, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum*

**Lecture Four: Dr Carl Walsh (Mercer County Community College)**

**Bio:** Carl is an adjunct professor at Mercer County Community College having earned his PhD in Near Eastern and Mediterranean Archaeology at University College London and his BA in Egyptology from Cambridge University. He is a specialist on the archaeology of the Kerma culture and cross-cultural interactions across the Mediterranean, western Asia, and north Africa during the second millennium BCE.

**Title:** All That Glitters Is Not Gold: Nubian Skeuomorphic Arts

**Abstract:** This paper explores how the material aspects of objects, such as color, size, and texture, can be used to better understand the artistic traditions of the Kerma culture during the Classic Kerma Period (1700-1550 BCE). The overlapping nature of Kerma artistic traditions is illustrated through a case study of skeuomorphism—when the physical aspects of one material are referenced in another—seen in a small corpus of metal vessels that are meant to mimic the properties of pottery. This example is then used to demonstrate how other skeuomorphic elements can be seen in Kerman and wider Nubian artistic traditions across time.